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Department of Biology, Room 56-423

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October 24, 1972

To the Editor  
The New York Times  
229 West 43rd Street  
New York, New York 10036

Dear Sir:

Your editorial (October 22) on The Presidential Issue states that "the President and his men have injected into national life a new and unwelcome element -- fear of government repression, a few reminiscent of that bred by the McCarthyism of twenty years ago." The truth of your statement has been brought home to me in a distressing way in the last few weeks, while collecting signatures for an advertisement against the Nixon administration. Several distinguished members of the scientific community expressed the fear that by signing they might jeopardize the approval of pending applications for research grants from the government. At least one well-known scientist, after having signed, asked that his signature be removed for that reason.

If we have reached such a state of intimidation, people should realize what this means, not only in terms of government corruption, but also and more importantly in terms of corruption of the public by this administration. There is every reason to fear that four more years of it may plunge our nation, from a degrading fear of government repression to a state of utter corruption and demoralization.

S. E. Luria

(For purposes of identification only, the writer is an Institute Professor and Sedgwick Professor of Biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology).